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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 14 July 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Kamal (Pakistan), Mr. Papadatos (Greece), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS:

(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (E/1995/32)

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(i) DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (A/50/227-E/1995/99)

(agenda item 6) (E/1995/70, 82 and 92)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to begin its consideration of agenda item 6, in general and the first 9 of the 17 sub-items, in particular. He reminded delegations of the decision taken by the Council at its 12th meeting whereby its work under the general segment of the session would focus on the adoption of decisions, without a general debate.

However, in the case of items on which there had been no previous debate in another body, or on which there was a report before the Council that had not been discussed earlier, delegations might wish to enter into a discussion prior to taking action on the particular issue.

Mr. STOBY (Director of the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on products harmful to health and the environment

(A/50/182-E/1995/66), said that it described the work done by the United Nations system and other organizations, addressed a number of issues of

concern and discussed the implications of recent developments in the fields of chemical safety, environment and trade as they related to the Consolidated List.

The fifth issue of the List, published in August 1994, covered regulatory action on over 700 pharmaceuticals and industrial and agricultural chemicals as reported to the United Nations by 93 Governments. The list showed continuous growth towards comprehensiveness of coverage both in terms of the number of products covered and the number of reporting Governments. The Consolidated List was unique in being the only document that presented in a unified manner information on restrictive regulatory measures on a range of pharmaceutical and chemical products, as well as commercial data on manufacturers and trade names of products.

Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on consumer protection (E/1995/70), he said that 10 years had passed since the General Assembly had adopted the Guidelines for Consumer Protection. The Council's adoption of resolutions in 1988 and 1990 calling for the implementation of the Guidelines reflected the view of member Governments that a sound consumer policy had a vital bearing on equitable and sustainable economic and social development.

Since the Guidelines had been adopted, there had been a growing recognition that the protection of consumers was not a luxury for the rich but a necessity for the poor. Consumer policy assisted society in making the right choices and thereby deriving maximum benefit from limited economic resources. The Guidelines provided a valuable framework for the elaboration and strengthening of consumer policies and legislation. In countries where government interest in consumer protection was relatively recent, they outlined essential matters that must be dealt with. In countries where consumer law was more developed, they provided a framework for the evaluation of existing laws to see whether certain areas needed strengthening.

Governments of both developing and developed countries as well as of countries in transition had confirmed that the Guidelines had had a significant impact on their work in consumer protection. In the decade since the document had been formulated, rapid changes - environmental issues, the global debt crisis, the spread of financial services and the growth of advertising and the

mass media - had had a profound effect on consumers. As the international market-place became increasingly globalized, tools such as the Guidelines, which aimed at providing universally accepted standards, became ever more important. The Secretariat was prepared to continue to assist Governments in implementing the Guidelines and to study further areas to which it had been suggested that they should be extended.

Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/128 (A/50/190-E/1995/73), he said that it focused on the requirements for international assistance and financial resources for implementing the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD); institutional follow-up issues and reporting procedures; and action taken by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, the governing body of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Commission on Population and Development.

He reminded the Council that in resolution 49/128, the General Assembly requested the Council to review the terms of reference, mandate and composition of the Commission on Population and Development and to consider the establishment of a separate executive board of UNFPA and the submission to the Secretary-General of recommendations concerning secretariat support and coordination arrangements for the United Nations system and recommendations regarding the establishment of an appropriate inter-agency coordination mechanism for implementation of the Programme of Action. It also requested the Council to review the reporting procedures within the United Nations system regarding population and development issues and to discuss matters relating to implementation of population and development programmes.

Introducing the note by the Secretariat on the elements of a draft programme for the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (E/1995/92), he emphasized the importance the Secretary-General attached to the proclamation of the Year and his determination to see a system-wide response. The note contained a detailed list of possible activities, and any comments made by the Council would provide a basis for further consultations leading to the final report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

Lastly, introducing the report of the Secretary-General on methods of work of the Committee for Development Planning (E/1995/82), he said that it sought to draw on the experience gained through the work of the Committee over the past few years to develop proposals for linking the Committee's work more closely with the thematic issues discussed by the Council and its subsidiary organs. The linkage between the work of the Council and the Committee could be improved by the early identification of themes to be considered by the Council and the presentation of the Committee's findings to the Council on a regular basis.

Mrs. DOWDESWELL (Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (A/50/227-E/1995/99), said that many actions had been undertaken to implement the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD), but their effect had been insuficient to slow the progress of land degradation in the world's drylands. As a result, a whole chapter of Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), was addressed to that scourge and, inter alia, called for the negotiation of an international treaty to deal with desertification more effectively. That had been achieved with the adoption in June 1994 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.

The Convention built on the PACD, with its stress on national planning activities. Once ratified, it would become the major instrument through which desertification control activities were implemented. Programmes and projects had already been reviewed in the light of the Convention and action was under way to implement the resolution on urgent action for Africa attached thereto. The Convention made it obligatory for affected countries to establish strategies and priorities to combat desertification within the framework of sustainable development plans and policies.

While chapter 38 of Agenda 21 had implications for all organizations dealing with desertification, UNEP, like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had been given special tasks to perform and the two programmes were called upon to ensure cooperation and coordination among United Nations organizations.

The processes of land degradation were complex and variable, a cycle of natural and socio-economic cause and effect. Deforestation, degraded rangelands, exhausted cultivated fields, salinized irrigated land and depleted groundwater resources all had terrible consequences for the poverty-stricken people living in the drylands. With little or no capital or control over their resources, many had little alternative but to mine those resources or to migrate during times of stress. Desertification at its most critical concerned the degradation of individual landholdings on which families depended for survival. Over 100 million people throughout the world were believed to be facing imminent starvation or permanent displacement owing to that phenomenon.

Ways must be found to reverse the vicious cycle of poverty and degradation. The Desertification Convention provided an opportunity to pay more attention to the needs of people in the drylands and to ensure they received the necessary support to maintain sustainable livelihoods on their holdings. Investments must be made in people as well as in land. The new partnership between UNEP and UNDP in desertification control would provide for even more effective assistance to Governments in preventing and managing the problems connected with desertification and drought.

Mr. CHAMIE (Director of the Population Division, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (E/1995/69), said that the Secretary-General had designated the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA) as the focal point for the preparation of the report on international migration and development called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/127. Consequently, the views of Governments on convening an international conference on international migration and development had been solicited by means of a letter sent to all permanent representatives to the United Nations on 6 February 1995. The letter indicated that responses were expected by 3 March 1995: by 26 April 1995, responses had been received from only 37 Governments. It was not possible, therefore, to assess the extent to which the responses obtained represented the views of all Governments.

The report provided an overview of international migration trends and policies, dealt with the economic and social aspects of international migration and also detailed the responses of Governments to the proposed convening of an international conference.

Many Governments felt that such a step was premature, some of them deeming that more negotiations on the issue were needed, while several had been in favour of convening a conference but had expressed a variety of views on its possible objectives and the issues that should be addressed. There had been general agreement that the conference would be of a political nature, involving negotiations between Governments, though it had been noted that the conference would also have to deal with technical and substantive issues.

A large majority of the Governments in favour of holding a conference had supported the convening of regional meetings to help reach agreement on difficult issues, and most had favoured the active participation of the relevant international organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the preparatory process and in the conference itself. Governments that were reluctant to hold a conference nevertheless recognized that international migration and its relation to development was an important issue, but suggested that it be treated by the normal machinery of the United Nations. Many considered that there had already been too many global conferences and thought it wiser to work towards the implementation of existing agreements than to spend scarce resources on yet another one.

The regional commissions had proposed, under item 7 of the Council's agenda, a coordinated project on international migration and its economic impact on countries of origin and countries of destination. That proposal, which stood on its own merits, would, if accepted, also provide very useful background material for the preparation of a conference on international migration and development.

Mr. HERMAN (International Economic Relations Branch, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis), introducing the World Economic and Social Survey, 1995 (E/1995/50), said the Survey was the main economic publication of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA), which also produced a large volume of reports, analyses

and data sets in the areas of statistics, demographics and analysis of economic and social policy.

Since the Survey was a fairly voluminous publication, a press release containing the text of the first chapter and some tables of economic data, estimates and forecasts had been made available to delegations. The forecast for the growth of economic activity in 1995 had been finalized in April of that year. Since then, additional data had become available, requiring the revision of some of the projections for the economies in transition. In some cases those revisions would be negative, but in others the data suggested a less pessimistic outcome than had originally been foreseen. It appeared that the decline in output predicted for 1995 in the Commonwealth of Independent

States (CIS) would be only half as large as forecast in the Survey. It could thus be said that the long-sought recovery of output in those States was beginning.

The Survey's call for a "green revolution for Africa" had been taken up by the Secretary-General in his statement to the Council. The essence of that call was, first, that agricultural research was increasingly becoming a private-sector activity; and secondly, that biotechnological research held out real promise for creating new seed varieties for food grains that would be more suited to the African environment. That important opportunity to better the economic and social situation in Africa might not, however, be fully grasped, owing to inadequate public-sector resources to support research. The main thrust of the proposal was therefore to strengthen the efforts already being undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in that area through enhanced and new methods of international cooperation.

The materials in the 1995 Survey were grouped in a different way than had hitherto been the practice so that readers could more easily find the items of greatest relevance to them. The Survey was regarded as a publication in transition, and DESIPA would be happy to receive feedback from delegations on the new structure and on the other proposed innovation.

Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on cooperation in fisheries in Africa (E/1995/94), said that the ministerial meeting which should have been covered by the report annexed thereto had been postponed and was currently scheduled for 10 to 14 July. The report was thus a very brief document.

FAO would continue, with its partners in African development, to support the Atlantic coastal States of Africa in their efforts to strengthen cooperation in that sector, especially with regard to fisheries. He drew the attention of the representatives of the African countries concerned to paragraph 5 of the report and invited States which had not yet done so to deposit instruments with FAO as speedily as possible so as to facilitate the entry into force of the Regional Convention on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean.

Mr. N'DOW (Assistant Secretary-General, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)) said that the rapidly changing global, political, economic and social environment of the closing years of the twentieth century explained the close attention given to the focus and content of international and national development strategies and to the continuum of major international conferences sponsored by the United Nations, one of which would be the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

The end of the cold war had provided a unique, and in many ways unexpected, opportunity to act with common purpose to fulfil the hope and promises set forth in the Charter. The better world that was sought would have to be shaped in human settlements, since the predicted change in civilization was towards a global urban habitat, founded on cities and towns, large and small, where the majority of people would live and work in the twenty-first century, where most economic growth must be generated and housing provided, where most natural resources would be consumed and where the need for environmental management would be most critical. Cities and towns would thus assume even greater importance, being the stage on which the many institutions of civil society would seek to play out their political and social agendas, and where poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease and the resultant social ills must be combated.

In facing the urban challenge, the world's continuing rural dilemma, which compounded the problems of the cities, must not be overlooked. In urban and rural areas alike, the poor were at risk, and women and children suffered most from lack of shelter. According to the latest authoritative figures, some 1.4 billion people - 40 per cent more than 15 years previously - were living in absolute poverty and the number was increasing.

The Council had rightly shown special concern for the development situation in Africa by considering that issue at its high-level segment. No other region faced more challenges or had so much to do to integrate itself into an evolving global economy and compete on an equal footing with the rest of the world; but its development prospects were seriously at risk from the upheaval and conflict that inevitably stemmed from rapid political, economic and social change. Those factors alone were a compelling argument for a concerted effort by the

international community, the private sector, voluntary organizations and the scientific community to assist Africa.

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) was actively involved in the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on African Economic Recovery and Development. Habitat was the lead agency in two policy areas: urban management and the promotion of coherent settlement policies; and assistance activities as part of the continuum from relief to development. Both areas were critical to Africa's development objectives in the short, medium and long terms. Habitat's activities in Africa accounted for the widespread support, in that continent, for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

As the Secretary-General had pointed out, and as was reflected in the report of the Commission on Human Settlements on its fifteenth session (A/50/8 and Add.1), human settlements and development had become a priority challenge for the international community and the United Nations. One of the explicit aims of Habitat II and its preparatory process was to develop a plan of action which would also serve to advance the goals of other United Nations conferences at the local level, since human settlements development was, by its very nature, multisectoral.

In order to lay the groundwork for the unparalleled undertaking to integrate the goals of all the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s, Habitat had taken an active part in all those events and their preparatory processes. It attached great importance, in that regard, to all its relevant contacts outside the United Nations system, such as local authorities, the private sector, voluntary bodies, non-governmental organizations, and representatives of women and youth, all of which had an important contribution to make. The state of preparations for Habitat II, including the strong commitment and support from the host country, Governments of North and South, and United Nations bodies, gave grounds for optimism that its goals would be achieved.

The most important purpose of development and economic progress was to provide a greater opportunity and a better life for all. That was the underlying goal of human settlements development, and the challenge facing Habitat II.

Ms. BAUTISTA (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the follow up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was very important to the Group of 77 and China. They had therefore carefully studied the report of the

Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 49/128 and the report of the Commission on Population and Development on its twenty-eighth session (E/1995/27).

As the Commission was the intergovernmental body responsible for substantive consideration of complex issues relating to population and development, the Group of 77 and China supported its recommendation that it should also assist the Council by arranging for studies and advising the Council on population issues and development questions.

The Group of 77 and China also welcomed the recommendation that the Commission should review on a regular basis the flow of financial resources and the funding mechanism to achieve the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action.

In view of the expanded tasks of the Commission, the Group of 77 and China strongly recommended that the term of office of its members should be brought to the same level as those of the other functional commissions primarily responsible for the follow up to major international conferences such as the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Human Rights. The Cairo Programme of Action recognized the relationship between population and development and the Council should therefore pave the way for the direct participation in the work of the Commission of technical experts and other participants from a larger number of developing countries.

The Group of 77 and China recognized the important role of UNFPA in the follow up to ICPD not only with respect to the mobilization of resources and the implementation of the Conference's recommendations at the field level but also to the preparation of substantive reports from the Commission. The increase in the responsibilities of UNFPA should be taken into consideration by the members of the Council in discussing a proposal for the establishment of a separate executive board therefor.

With regard to international migration and development, there were different types of migratory movements, and distinctions must be made among them in order to understand fully the nature of those movements and to develop the necessary responses to each of them. The Group of 77 and China agreed with the opening statement of the report of the Secretary-General on the topic (E/1995/69) that

"International migration is widely recognized as an intrinsic part of the development process" and noted that ICPD had affirmed that demographic trends could not be considered in isolation from development.

Migration was not a new phenomenon and many, if not all, of the world's countries had grown and prospered from migratory movements, whether as sending or receiving countries. Migration occurred because there was a need for it, in both the receiving and the sending countries. The response to migration must be comprehensive, covering assistance for orderly migration, the protection of migrants and programmes of return and reintegration and addressing such problems as trafficking in and abuse of migrants.

It was important that governments should support the convening of an international conference on migration and development, taking into account the General Assembly recommendations for all countries to consider together the nature of migration and to cooperate comprehensively in addressing the problems that arose. States must also be encouraged to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

UNEP must be strongly supported, particularly in terms of the necessary financial resources. The Group of 77 and China joined the consensus on the new integrated approach submitted by UNEP on restructuring its work in four cross-cutting programmes, in the hope that that would help to move forward the implementation of Agenda 21. They supported the decision of UNDP, together with FAO, to begin negotiations on the important issue of Prior Informed Consent, which must underlie all international cooperation on environmental exchange.

The Group of 77 and China took note of the report of the Secretary-General on products harmful to health and environment (A/50/182-E/1995/66), which recognized the urgent need to strengthen capacities and capabilities for the identification, management and reduction of risks posed by chemicals to human health and environment. They encouraged the continued collaboration of the relevant agencies, including FAO, WHO and ILO, with respect to those activities.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China expressed strong support for the International Desertification Convention, and reiterated their call for the provision of the necessary financial resources to implement it.

Mrs. MENENDEZ (Observer for Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the report of the Commission for Sustainable Development (E/1995/32) revealed that its third session had been a big step forward in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and confirmed the Commission's role as the main forum for high-level political decision-taking to promote sustainable development. The Union welcomed the Commission's decision to establish an Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, under its aegis, and hoped that the Panel would soon begin its meetings. The work programmes established by the Commission on changes in production and consumption, the transfer of ecologically rational technology, cooperation and capacity-building, and the further development of indices of sustainable development were also welcome. The Union endorsed the proposal that special efforts be made to prepare for a general revision and evaluation of Agenda 21 in 1997.

The Union supported the draft decision submitted to the Council by the Commission on Population and Development at its twenty-eighth session (E/1995/27, para. 2) and believed that the Council should endorse Decisions 1995/1 and in 1995/2 adopted by the Commission at that session (para. 3). It welcomed the fact that, from 1996 onwards the Commission would meet annually. It felt that the Commission's composition should reflect its new broader mandate, as well as the need for harmonization with the other functional commissions, and that steps must be taken to ensure that the reports presented to the Commission formed a coherent whole and did not overlap. It was also important to provide adequate funding, within the resources available to DESIPA for the Population Division. Consideration should be given to complementarity of the functions of the latter, UNFPA and the Commission; and the Commission should take into account the new integrated thematic approach to population and development.

In the Union's view, the latest annual meeting of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had shown that adequate time and facilities were available for considering population-related activities, and that there was no justification for the

establishment of a separate executive board for UNFPA. The mobilization of domestic and international financial resources was fundamental to an efficient follow-up to ICPD and the Secretary-General's initiative to hold consultations on the matter would be useful. Also needed, in view of competition for scarce financial resources, was a shift in priorities at all levels of the United Nations system and optimum utilization of the resources available.

International migration, with special emphasis on its links with development, was to be the subject of the Commission's proposed multi-year work programme for 1997. The various aspects involved in that issue could be discussed within the framework of the relevant multilateral instances at the regional and interregional levels, including the various United Nations bodies concerned with migration issues, not to mention the General Assembly itself. Non-United Nations bodies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Council of Europe had a role to play also, and their possible involvement should be explored before considering the convening of an international conference. The Union would give careful study to the report of the Secretary-General on the issue (E/1995/69).

The Union considered the World Economic and Social Survey, 1995 (E/1995/50) to be a highly useful document, and welcomed its broad scope, the wealth of data and the effort to make it readily usable. The Survey placed substantial focus on the aspects of economic cooperation for development, highlighting crucial areas such as economic policy in the developing countries, population trends, the social and economic situation of women and the role of enterprises in countries with economies in transition.

In future, its publication should be more timely, so as to facilitate the Council's deliberations, especially in the high-level segment, and to assist its dialogues with the financial and trade institutions. In that regard, it would be useful if the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system were to collaborate in data collection and analysis; The Union hoped to hear the various organizations' reactions in that regard and concerning the various matters contained in the Survey.

Mr. BLANEY (United States of America) said his delegation recommended that the Council should endorse the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/1995/31) and its omnibus resolution, with particular reference to the decision to focus on information technology for development as the main theme for the Commission's next meeting. It also supported the Commission's recommendation that member countries should sign a "Declaration of Intent" on gender, science and technology for sustainable human development.

He reiterated the suggestion his delegation had made regarding the need to strengthen or streamline existing governance arrangements as necessary. It believed that careful study should be given to consolidating the Commission on Science and Technology for Development into the Commission on Sustainable Development. That governance consolidation would better serve the members of the Council in guiding and monitoring sustainable development processes.

The historic consensus reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) should not be underestimated. The Cairo Programme of Action was a well-balanced set of principles and goals that provided an excellent framework for population and development cooperation into the twenty-first century.

His delegation recommended that the Council should endorse the report of the Commission on Population and Development (E/1995/27) in its entirety, especially the proposed terms of reference and its recommendations regarding secretariat support, management and inter-agency coordination in annex I thereto, and the Commission's decision to adopt a topic-oriented and prioritized multi-work programme as an effective approach for monitoring and assessing the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

With regard to the composition of the Commission on Population and Development, his Government did not support expanding its membership beyond its current size of 27 until experience was gained under its new mandate. It continued to oppose the creation of a separate executive board for UNFPA and believed that retaining linkages between UNDP and UNFPA governance would ensure better coordination of policy and administrative guidance to the two organs by Member States.

International migration had emerged as a major issue in international relations. In addition to refugees and persons displaced by war and civil conflict, there were more than 100 million people living outside their countries of origin for reasons ranging from economic betterment to environmental degradation. His delegation did not, however, believe that the international community should hold a global migration conference for the time being.

There were five reasons for its opposition. First, it considered that, if too many global conferences were held, it diminished their usefulness in focusing world attention. Secondly, unlike population, poverty and women, there was no global consensus on what to do in the area of migration. Thirdly, in a time of scarce resources, it would be unwise to incur the expense of convening another global conference, the cost of which ran into the millions for Governments and the United Nations. Fourthly, a variety of other very useful forums had been identified or established to examine specific migration issues. For example, the Commission on Population and Development had designated its meeting in 1997 to conduct an in-depth study of international migration, with special emphasis on the linkages between migration and development. Fifthly, and most importantly, the results of the recent global conferences had not been absorbed and applied.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, water-resource problems were reaching crisis proportions. In addition to the lack of water and sanitation in developing countries, the unmanaged exploitation of watersheds, lakes, rivers, aquifers, and coastal waters depleted the economic value and biological diversity of water resources throughout the developing world. He was proud, however, of the efforts being made to assist developing countries to improve water management, policy analysis and planning procedures.

His delegation supported the strategic approach and related action plan for the second half of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. What was essential at that point was to integrate prevention and preparedness into national Governments' development-planning strategies. In that connection, his delegation encouraged the use of Country Strategy Notes (CSN), where they existed, to provide the framework for the United Nations system's efforts to assist national Governments in the implementation of the Yokohama Plan of Action.

However, his delegation did not underestimate the financial constraints under which the international community found itself. It was at a crossroads, and national Governments must move from promoting the concept of preparedness and prevention to implementation of disaster-reduction measures. That must become a priority for Governments, which should certainly include a preparedness and prevention dimension in their national development plans.

It was only in that way that the international community could respond with its existing resources to the identified priority needs of Governments, which must, of course, decide if preparedness and prevention constituted a priority need. In so doing, difficult choices on what was no longer a priority must also be made and decisions must be taken that the system could not fund the lower priorities from the regular budget.

Mr. BAATI (Observer for Tunisia) said that the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (E/1995/69), was well-balanced and comprehensive. In particular his delegation welcomed the fact that the report took account of the historic evolution of the phenomenon. In view of the complexity of the question, his delegation had chosen to concentrate on three aspects: development in the country of origin, the impact of the new economic and technological trends and the advisability of convening an international conference on migration and development.

Host countries were currently concentrating on combating illegal migration, which affected almost all countries and caused common problems. However, illegal migration was merely part of a much wider phenomenon and it would be shortsighted to overlook the basic causes of such migration, namely, the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the countries of origin including persistent poverty and high unemployment. If those causes were tackled in the countries of origin by supporting structural changes, the population would gradually stop leaving in search of a better life. Assistance to development should be linked to rapid job creation in the sectors that had suffered most and had caused people to emigrate.

In addition to the socio-economic causes in the countries of origin, there were other large-scale problems such as the structure of world society in general. Countries with a high demographic growth rate were affected in one way or another by the internationalization of their economies and large numbers of

their people were consequently tempted to emigrate. Another factor was the spectacular recent developments in the area of communications and technology. The international telecommunications network and cheaper air transportation had become accessible to large sectors of the population in many countries of the world, and the new possibilities of linkage with foreign countries also encouraged people to emigrate.

It would thus seem that there was a close link between foreign investment, trade liberalization and international migration and it was necessary to place the question of migration within international policies and programmes relating to international trade. International agencies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) might help decision makers in the public and private sectors to take optimal decisions with regard to foreign investment.

In connection with the part of the ICPD Programme of Action that related to international migration, he recalled the memorandum by the African Group drawing attention to the rights and living conditions of African immigrants in host countries. The group had asked that an international conference on migration and development be convened to study the problems that had been raised and to find ways and means of dealing with them. Such a conference would essentially tackle the question of legal migrants while trying at the same time to deal with the consequences of disorganized migration flows. International migration should not be a factor for dissension between countries of origin and host countries, since the nature of the problems to which migratory flows gave rise required solidarity and an exemplary degree of cooperation, giving priority to the aspects of migration which brought countries together rather than those which caused differences between them.

Mr. TAN Jian (China) said, with regard to the ICPD Programme of Action, that the crucial implementation problem was not so much coordination as the lack of availability of adequate resources, without which the Programme could not be effectively implemented. It was high time that the international community, particularly the developed countries, honoured its commitments. The developed countries should first substantially increase their contribution to the core funding resources of the United Nations development operations, demonstrate their political will to reach the target of 0.7 per cent for official development

assistance (ODA) and guarantee the availability of one third of the resources needed for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

General Assembly resolution 49/128 had established a coordination mechanism at three levels: The General Assembly, the Council and the Commission on Population and Development. As a functional Commission, the Commission had a particularly important role to play. There should be a clear division of labour between the Commission and UNFPA and the latter, as a funding agency, should lend full support to the Commission which should attach equal importance to both aspects of its work, namely, population and development.

The population of his country had already surpassed 1.2 billion, with a net growth of 14 million per year. Although the issue of population was far more complicated than sheer numbers, the size of the population in such a big country had a great bearing on its ability to achieve sustainable development. Moreover, the trend of population growth in such countries as his own would largely affect the world's population prospects. The international community must therefore pay due attention to that problem in the process of implementing the Programme of Action.

In recent years, notable progress had been made in developing international law in the field of environmental protection. On the specific environmental problems faced by the developing countries, however, little or no progress had been made. In fact, there were even signs of a retreat from past achievements. The reform of UNEP should proceed in the direction of facilitating sustainable development. It should concentrate on the prevention and elimination of pollution, control of ecological degradation, and poverty alleviation in the developing countries. In that connection, it should strengthen the role of its regional offices. His Government was firmly opposed to the erection of non-tariff barriers to trade on the pretext of environmental protection, for the purpose of impeding the trade growth and economic development of the developing countries.

Mr. GOMEZ-ROBLEDO (Mexico) said that ICPD had made a diagnosis of the migratory situation in the world which gave much food for thought. It constituted a first step towards a general study of international migration and its relationship with economic and social development. His Government had gone on record as being in favour of tackling the question of quantifying

international migration, particularly illegal migration, so as to have an objective basis for understanding the phenomenon and thus help do away with the myths and prejudices that only distorted the truth and damaged the relationships of peoples. That was why his delegation was in favour of convening a world conference on international migration and development.

The report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/1995/69) dealt with one of the many myths that existed about migrant workers. There were some people who believed that the migrant worker displaced the local worker and, in general, had a harmful effect on the wage scale, thereby helping to bring down the cost of labour. It was interesting to note that, in paragraph 24, the Secretary-General referred to studies carried out in the United States which concluded that immigrants did not depress the wages of native workers because migrants and natives did not compete for the same jobs. It had also been asserted that migrants were more likely to resort to public assistance than local workers. Another myth that, according to the Secretary-General, was not supported by the facts.

With regard to the situation in the countries of origin, his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that emigration was not to be viewed as a panacea for development problems. As his Government had said on numerous occasions, it wished to export goods and not its valuable human resources.

In the vast majority of cases, labour migration met a real demand for workers which the labour force of the receiving country could not or would not satisfy. Migrant workers had helped to generate wealth in some of the most prosperous areas of the world, wealth which could not be compared with the social services which a migrant worker and his family were entitled to receive. The Secretary-General mentioned the lack of recognition in the receiving countries of the important economic contribution of migrant labour, even unskilled labour.

The myth that migrant workers stayed for a short time only led to expectations in the receiving country that were not necessarily fulfilled and had an impact on the erroneous belief that migrant workers were responsible for the economic difficulties which, in times of crisis, a particular country experienced.

All those considerations strengthened his delegation's support for an international conference on the subject. It thought that the meagreness of the responses to the Secretariat's letter to Governments should not be interpreted as a lack of interest in the subject. The complexity of the questions connected with international migration made it necessary to analyse the subject in some depth in order to obtain a better understanding of its dimensions and implications. Consequently, it was not easy to define precisely the objectives of such an international conference. Consultations should be held at a regional and subregional level to establish the agenda of the conference. His delegation thus proposed that a group of international experts be established to assess the viability of various types of regional consultations and to identify experts in each region who could make a preliminary study of international migration.

There was no question of duplicating the valuable studies already carried out by the United Nations, IOM and OECD, but the results should be updated and systematized. Apart from their usefulness to Member States, they would provide the necessary basis for deciding on the advisability of convening a world conference.

Turning to the UNCTAD report and the conclusions of the Trade and Development Board (TDB), he said that trade continued to be a major factor in economic growth, particularly for the developing countries. It was, therefore, urgent to achieve an open, non-discriminatory and fair international trading system - a task in which UNCTAD could play an important role.

His Government attached special importance to the implementation of international agreements on the linkages between trade and the environment, especially in relation to trade as an instrument for economic growth and development, which in turn widened the scope for national environmental protection policies. To that end, the developing countries should be increasingly integrated into a dynamic and equitable multilateral economy. It was essential to recognize that the promotion of sustainable development was incompatible with the imposition of economic and environmental conditions, which could serve as a pretext for a new type of protectionism.

As for UNCTAD itself, it should be strengthened as a forum for the analysis and exchange of information and for the promotion of scientific and technical

cooperation for the benefit of the developing countries. One of its functions should be to formulate international trade policies. In the light of the establishment of WTO, it was essential to ensure that the two organizations supported one another and did not overlap. The experience accumulated during its 30 years of existence and the reforms that had been introduced since the eighth session of the Conference were evidence that UNCTAD had the adaptability to address new issues within its purview.

Likewise, the mid-term review of the intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD had made it possible for agreement to be reached on strengthening its activities in analysing, evaluating and recommending appropriate trade policies, and provided an opportunity to make the necessary organizational changes, for example, regarding the format of meetings and the consolidation of the work of some UNCTAD committees. Preparations for UNCTAD IX, which would have to consider new developments and make recommendations for the future, were of crucial importance to Member States.

The examination of major topics by the Trade and Development Board, such as changing structural-adjustment policies in the developed countries, and trade policies and their impact on world trade and development, were of special importance in identifying policies that would enable the developing countries to resume growth and achieve just, equitable and competitive integration into international trade. The Board's discussions of sustainable

development activities had also been of great significance, and reflected the progress made by UNCTAD in the analysis of the trade-environment link, as also had been the range of technical subjects covered.

In its deliberations, the Council should bear constantly in mind the commitments entered into by the international community in the Declaration and Programme of Action approved at the World Summit for Social Development - particularly regarding action to eradicate poverty, to expand productive employment and to enhance social integration - and the relevance of trade to achieving those objectives.

Mr. MALHOTRA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that UNESCO had participated fully in the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and had, in particular, contributed to the reports on the chapters of Agenda 21 on a number of central issues. UNESCO also served as task manager within the United Nations system for chapters 35 and 36 of the Agenda.

In connection with the Convention on Biological Diversity, information on the UNESCO contribution in the area of biodiversity research and in situ conservation would be reported in a fuller version of his statement, which would be distributed later.

The ICPD Programme of Action made far-reaching proposals in areas that were of high priority for UNESCO, particularly with regard to education and investment in human development. Another priority area was the interlinked issues of development, population and environment, which were being addressed by a new UNESCO interdisciplinary and inter-agency cooperation project entitled "Environment and Population, Education and Information for Development". The ICPD recommendations concerning gender equity and the empowerment of women were being strongly supported by UNESCO, primarily through its work in basic and population education. Other areas in the Programme of Action of particular relevance to UNESCO were: urbanization trends and megacities; issues related to international migration, refugees and displaced persons; and technology, data collection, research and development.

UNESCO had played an active part in the two substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Conference on Human

Settlements - Habitat II, details of which would be given in the text to be distributed.

Concerning the monitoring of global environment problems, UNESCO was fully committed to participation in the Earthwatch programme and would cooperate in the global environmental observing systems through its environmental science programmes. Other UNESCO programmes and activities would be directed to various target audiences, particularly decision makers and planners.

The scientific and technical and educational aspects of the Desertification Convention were taken into account in the relevant UNESCO programmes, which would initially focus attention on the implementation of urgent measures in the African region. Cooperation with Sudano-Sahelian countries would be directed to strengthening their scientific and technical capacity to combat desertification and drought.

Mrs. ESCALER (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that international migration had not only given desperate men and women a new lease of life but had contributed to nation building, helped to forge bonds among nations, and brought new ideas and skills to the receiving societies. Although annual migratory flows from developing countries had not increased, relative to population size, the contemporary world tended increasingly to take a one-sided view of migration, perceiving it only as a problem. A response to large-scale population movements relying solely on stricter controls could not possibly be adequate. The problems that existed were in large measure the consequences of underdevelopment, and sustainable development remained the most effective long-term solution.

IOM stressed the need for a new comprehensive approach which recognized the interplay between migration and contemporary economic, social and political forces, and for a comprehensive policy framework to address them. Accordingly, it had developed a strategic plan covering up-to-date migration policies, adequate migration structures, increased international trade, aid and investment, programmes for the voluntary return of migrants and dissemination of reliable information.

It therefore welcomed the well-balanced presentation of international migration issues in chapter X of the ICPD Programme of Action. Mechanisms would,

however, have to be developed to mobilize the energies of the many actors, activities and disciplines needed to make the Programme of Action operational, and her organization had attempted in its own strategic planning to link its operational activities and research to the Programme.

Migrant-receiving industrialized countries should promote development in emigration-prone regions and lower trade barriers limiting their access to international markets. There was widespread agreement that migrants could contribute to the development of their countries of origin if remittances and the return of skills were incorporated into policy packages that included trade liberalization, aid and productive investment in those countries. Moreover, although irregular migration could be disruptive, planned and orderly migration could contribute to sustainable development and benefit individuals as well as the societies of origin and destination alike.

It was clear that international dialogue on migration and development must be pursued in the wake of ICPD. Expert meetings would be particularly productive at the initial stages of the dialogue, and the recommendations they made could then be discussed at regional meetings, with active participation by the countries of origin, transit and reception, areas of possible agreement identified and an agenda established for further political negotiations at a higher level. At that stage, the decision might be taken to convene a United Nations conference on international migration and development, in which event IOM would participate and cooperate fully with all the others concerned.

Mr. KOVAL (Ukraine) said that the ecologically determined internal migration resulting from the Chernobyl accident strikingly illustrated the connection between environment and migration mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (E/1995/69). Reference was also made in the report to a conference on the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and associated migratory movements in the CIS and neighbouring countries, which was evidence of the acuteness of the migration problem. His country was playing a very active part in the preparatory process for that conference.

Bearing in mind the momentous ecological consequences of the Chernobyl accident, his delegation welcomed the section in the report of the Governing

Council of UNEP (A/50/25) on improvement of the international response to environmental emergencies, and the related decision (18/19) inviting Governments and relevant international organizations of the United Nations system to provide assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies and to provide additional resources for that purpose. It hoped that the Joint UNEP/Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) Environment Unit would pay greater attention to the Chernobyl situation, which fell within its mandate. In order to improve environmental security in Europe, his Government had decided to decommission the Chernobyl nuclear power station by the year 2000 and to transform it into an environmentally safe installation. It also intended to set up an international scientific and technological centre on measures to deal with the consequences of atomic and radiation accidents and wished to associate all international organizations and countries with the work of that Centre, whose results would be open to all.

The work of the Commission on Sustainable Development was to be commended. To focus its activities more specifically, the Commission should strengthen its collaboration with Governments and take full account of the specific aspects of the development of various countries, in particular those in transition, where profound social and economic changes were occurring. The achievement of sustainable development in such countries would require additional financial and technical resources, which could in part be secured by reducing military expenditure. Other means to that end were the liberalization of trade, the abolition of protectionist measures, and the creation of potential for environmentally safe technologies.

His Government attached great importance to the preservation of biological diversity and welcomed the Commission's decision to establish an open-ended Intergovernmental Group on Forestry. It also supported efforts to restructure the United Nations organs dealing with trade and economic cooperation, with particular reference to UNCTAD.

Mr. BRANDÃO CAVALCANTI (Brazil), Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, introducing the Commission's report on its third session (E/1995/32), said that much of the credit for the success of the session was due to his predecessor as Chairman, to the inter-sessional work carried out on a

number of major topics, and to the dissemination of practical examples of sustainability at both the national and local levels. The Commission had also greatly benefited from its constructive relationship with other United Nations bodies in the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), and from the directives received from the High-level Advisory Board. The third session had also had the advantage of the presence of high-ranking government officials.

Sectoral issues on the agenda had been primarily land-resource related, including land-use planning, fragile ecosystems, sustainable agriculture, and biological diversity. Among the major decisions taken at the session had been the establishment of an Intergovernmental Panel on Forests - recently endorsed by the Council - and two ad hoc working groups. He hoped that the Panel would hold its first meeting no later than mid-September, and he was confident that the Commission's appeal for financial support on an extrabudgetary basis would be favourably considered. The working groups were to deal with the remaining sectoral chapters on protection of the atmosphere and of the oceans, and to continue the examination of financial resources and mechanisms and of changing patterns of production and consumption. The Commission would also be analysing access to environmentally sustainable technologies of particular relevance to those topics.

The priorities of the Commission's work programme were: a concentrated effort to assess the implementation of Agenda 21; enhanced and coordinated cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system and a dialogue with the major groups in civil society, particularly the private sector, in order to define their roles and commitments to sustainable development.

The observance of recommendations and proposals in Agenda 21 could be measured by adopting appropriate indicators and preparing action plans or national reports on relevant social, economic, environmental and institutional aspects of the specific country or region. While information received from all member countries was important, it had to be borne in mind that a relatively small group of countries represented a high proportion of the world's total population, land mass, natural resources and GNP. The relative stage of their sustainability and the solutions they adopted would require special analysis by

the Commission, the results of which would be of value in defining responsibilities and determining not only the economic, financial and technological aspects, but also the cultural, regional and strategic factors of sustainable development. They might also focus on the prospect for various forms of cooperation with the less developed countries.

One of the most encouraging developments with regard to Agenda 21 was the significant number of national initiatives triggered by the Commission, and the remarkable work of the Earth Council in helping to organize national councils on sustainable development, which had been reported at recent meetings in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

In order to achieve effective cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system and to avoid duplication of effort, the Commission, in addition to its participation in the IACSD, was undertaking a review of its decisions with multidisciplinary implications, and had entered upon joint consideration of them with UNEP, UNDP, UNCTAD and the Commission on Science and Technology. As well as maintaining regular contacts with NGOs, dialogue was proceeding with major groups in support of the United Nations conferences being held over the next two years, particular importance being attached to HABITAT II and the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women.

Two new subjects were to be included in the following year's agenda of the Commission which were of particular importance at a time when many Governments were transferring responsibilities for economic-development issues and employment opportunities to private enterprise, and a special day was to be devoted to business and industry and to workers and labour unions.

There was good reason to be optimistic about the prospects for the Commission, which had proved dynamic and action-oriented, and whose agenda encompassed economic growth and development, social progress and equity, protection of the environment, the rational use of natural uses, and capacity-strengthening in both the public and private sectors.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.